

BELGIUM-GERMANY-ENGLAND LINK? JOHN COCKERILL LINE?

By ALAN CROZIER.

When Belgium was occupied by Germany in 1914-18, German stamps were overprinted "Belgien" with a new value in Centimes.

The accompanying photocopy shows a cover bearing one of these stamps with the firm's name at the top 'Societe Anonyme John Cockerill, Seraing, Belgique' and the perfin JC/S. As this appears to be a very 'English' name I checked the Tomkins Catalogue and found that John Cockerill Line, Shipowners used the perfin J.C/L (J1510.01). This perfin is known from 1912 to 1939.

Is there any connection between J.C/L = John Cockerill, London and JC/S = John Cockerill, Seraing? This raises a number of questions: if it is a British shipping line, how could it have been operating in Belgium in 1915; Seraing is near Liege, which is nowhere near the coast; does this suggest river boats?

The configuration is different, being 9,10/11 but this perfin could not have been produced in G.B. at this time and so such differences would not be questioned.

The boxed handstamp relates to the Censor Office in Liege (spelt Luttich in German).

